

A BETTER SYSTEM WITH THE PBS

NST 28/6/14 MS9

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ON the first of a two-part series on the school-based assessment system (PBS), the Ministry of Education's Examination Syndicate Deputy Director (Operations) Dr Sulaiman Hashim, Head of Sector, Primary and Lower Secondary Examination Management Sector, Johara Abdul Wahab and the sector's assistant director Fauzi Asirop took the time to explain the new system.

Q: How would you compare the previous assessment system involving Form Three examination, Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) and the new PBS system involving Form Three Assessment (Penilaian Tingkatan 3 or PT3)?

Sulaiman: Previous assessment systems like Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) which ran from 1993 to 2013 only assessed the intellectual capacity of a student, which is one of four potentials with the three covering physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

We believe in the need for improvements so that students could receive a holistic assessment that could measure various aspects of development.

The system involves four parts which are school assessment (PS), central assessment (PP), School Sport and Co-curricular Assessment (PAJSK) and Psychometric Assessment (PPsi).

For example, PAJSK is to measure a

by the Examination Syndicate, which specifies mastery of subjects according to six bands.

Among others, the bands comprise Knowing (Band 1), Knowing and Understanding (Band 2) to Knowing, Understanding and Exemplary Conduct (Band 6). A teacher would be able to see the student's development for each subject and make necessary adjustments in the teacher's teaching approach.

The teacher can use this to help students still in Band 1 and if he is creative, can even get Band 6 students to help Band 1 students.

The teacher then uses summative assessment to gauge the student's achievement after having gone through various tests like mid-year and year-end exams.

Sulaiman: This is different from the previous system where the teacher



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Communication skills are important in the context of our multi-ethnic society. This is because when one does not master communication skills, what is uttered by another may be misunderstood.

We have to make soft skills become part of programmes that we are pushing for, and not hope that it could just happen like that.

PBS is part of ongoing efforts discussed by the Examination Syndicate since 2005. We looked at other countries practicing school-based assessment to see their implementation so we could formulate the concept in the Malaysian context.

This is critical as any changes to the curriculum would only show the

student's physical developments, PPSi looks into emotional and spiritual development, while PS and PP measure intellect.

PS differs from PP because the former is conducted by school teachers, the questions are made, set, graded by teachers in order to gauge the formative assessment of students.

This means to measure how much the student had progressed in line with the curriculum.

PS also has a summative assessment aspect where it aims to track how much a student has mastered and what he learns via mid year exams. Every topic is assessed to gauge a student's mastery. This is implemented in an ongoing manner for all Form One, Two and Three students.

The central assessment part in the PT3 involves the central education body, Malaysia Examinations Syndicate or Lembaga Peperiksaan. The syndicate prepares questions which are implemented by teachers and the answer scripts are marked by teachers.

The Syndicate prepares the answers and marking scheme so that when the teachers mark papers, it would be based on the scheme and not on what the teacher knows. PT3 is a PBS component which measures the student's intellect and academic dimension.

Q: What are the formative (course-work, quizzes and others) and summative (examinations) components of this school assessment or PS?

Johara: A school's formative assessment is done in accordance with a student development guide released

into students' level of mastery of a subject after undergoing mid-year year exams following six months of lessons.

However in the PBS system, formative assessment is an ongoing endeavour and needs to be recorded. This allows the teacher to spot the student's non-mastery of the subject early on and take remedial measures without waiting after mid-year and year-end exams.

In the pre-PBS system, even if a teacher attempts remedial action on a Form Two student who did not master Form One teachings, he is also encumbered by a need to complete the syllabus for other students.

Johara: The PBS system involves the issuance of reports based on the four aspects of PBS (PS Report, PT3 Report, PAJSK Report, PPSi Report).

A Form One student will receive a school assessment report which comprises his formative development and summative achievement in exams. The student will also receive psychometry report from the school counselor.

The student also receives a PAJSK report stating his Body Mass Index (BMI), National Physical Fitness Standard or Segak as well as his involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs, among others.

In Form Two, he will also receive a PS report stating his Band for his development and grade for his summative aspect. But he will not have a psychometric report.

In Form Three, he will receive all four reports, including the PT3 Report. Even though the school implements

the instants methods are provided by the Examinations Syndicate and the module is available to school counselors.

PAJSK assessment is done by teachers during Physical Education and by looking at a student involvement in school associations, uniformed associations, and sport activities from school-level to international level.

Q: What is the role of the four PBS reports for students after they have completed Form Three?

Johara: The various educational institutions like boarding schools and vocational schools can elect to seek any of the four reports from students applying to join them after completing Form 3.

Q: Which schools will use the PBS system?

Johara: Schools which would utilise PBS include government schools, government-assisted schools, state religious schools, private schools registered with the government and non-registered private schools that still use the standard government curriculum.

Q: What are the improvements made to PBS based on feedback from stakeholders.

Johara: Among improvements made to PBS implementation is where student data is now keyed into standalone school systems that are not collected by the higher education authorities.

This is so teachers can use it to add improvements in any remedial steps

he take for students requiring it.

Q: What is the impact of the PBS assessment on students

Johara: The questions teachers use in formative assessment is based on the individual student's level and should not be used to gauge other students of various levels as this would not be fair to the student. The questions used must be able to give information about the student's progress.

Dr Sulaiman: The teacher monitors his students daily and if he notices a student does not understand something, he could try to help that student, getting feedback there and then for future monitoring and assistance, if need be.

Q: How would you compare Malaysia's PBS system with the school assessment system in other countries?

Johara: The school-based assessment system here differs from those practiced in other countries because the latter systems do not focus on the four components like in Malaysia.

PBS is meant to send a message to students' parents about what kind of individual that we should strive to mould.

Would we want students that focuses on academics but are unable to communicate, and lack physical drive in sports and extra-curricular activities?

Q: What is the importance and advantages of PBS

Sulaiman: The new system is necessary in light of the changed world of high technology and without borders.

years 12 years later through the progression of students from Primary One to Form Five.

Johara: With PBS, parents do not need to wait until their children are in Form Three to know about their academic developments.

Q: Will the progress of a student from Form One to Form Two cause any issue in terms of continuous student assessment?

Sulaiman: Record-keeping of student data is important as even in the event a different teacher teaches a student, he would be able to check the student's profile based on his Form One record.

Q: Would the PBS system put extra work on teachers?

Sulaiman: There is no basis in criticism that teachers are burdened with more work under the PBS because the only difference between PBS and the previous system is that records are kept and reported to keep up with student developments.

Before the PBS, teachers were already giving monthly tests, preparing questions and marking answers for mid-year and year-end exams, so there is no difference between the work under PBS and before.

Johara: The four PBS components are handled by different teachers. The one handling PPSi are school counselors and PS is handled by the teacher teaching the subject at the school. PJSK is handled by teachers in charge of school associations and uniformed bodies.